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ABSTRACT

The evidence of numerous studies on women's roles and attitudes suggest that, at least historically, women have attitudinally agreed that women's place is in the home. However, more recent studies suggest a new trend in attitudes. Women have now assumed a pose of wanting to work, while at the same time they tend to cluster in traditionally female occupations and express uncertainty over the compatibility of the dual role. Baldwin-Wallace College, a liberal arts and pre-professional college of approximately 2,200 enrollment, has undertaken a program of career planning for adult women to assist them in understanding themselves, and their relationship to careers and occupations. Attitudinal and institutional changes cannot be accomplished by women alone. Since males play an influential role in the career development of women and are generally more credible to and have more impact upon established institutions, it is essential that men also become significantly involved in the facilitation of women's career development. The proposed presentation attempts to provide information about this on-going career program and the use of male and female counselors in the program by discussion and the experiential involvement of the audience. (Author)

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ADULT WOMEN'S CAREER PLANNING IN A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE UTILIZING MALE AND FEMALE COUNSELORS

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A.P.G.A.
Chicago, Illinois - April 13, 1976

Introduction

While addressing the Ohio State graduating class in 1974, President Ford called for a new commitment to lifelong learning from colleges and universities across the country. He asked that they open wide their doors and their programs to accommodate the educational needs of individuals beyond the usual college age. Recent studies show that American society is placing greater emphasis on the continuing education of adults. Individuals from every walk of life are realizing more and more that to live and work effectively in an evolving society they must continue their education throughout life.

According to the Bureau of the Census, 1.5 million adults 35 years of age and over were enrolled in or attending school in October, 1972. Almost 800,000 of them were in college, either as undergraduates or as graduate students. Over half (53%) were women, the majority of whom were going to college part-time (U. S. Fact Book, 1974, p. 140). This represents an increase of nearly 100% from the 215,000 adult women enrolled in 1969.

While a few colleges and universities saw as long ago as the early sixties the potential of the mature women's college movement and took steps to accommodate it, the vast majority of the institutions appeared not to have noticed. Now, however, there is a proliferation of special centers and programs. The Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor listed 375 institutions nationwide with special programs or services for adult women in 1971, the last year for which figures are available, and noted that its list was "not inclusive." A listing in the Chronicle of Higher Education in December, 1974 estimated the number of programs for women in colleges

and universities as being closer to 500, which marked an 80% increase in programs since 1968. Most of the women who return to school view their return as a very serious step. They have distinctive needs on both psychological and practical levels, and meeting these needs requires a special effort on the part of colleges that have been geared to students who arrived directly from high school and who have other types of concerns. It is important for counselors, student personnel workers, and administrators to understand the needs of these women, and to develop programs, activities and reforms to meet these needs, because such women constitute a valuable resource that no school or society can afford to neglect. For women headed back to the work world, career counseling and guidance is as essential as the additional education they seek.

The University of Minnesota was the first university to formally initiate a continuing education program for women. Known as the Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women, the program, financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, began in September, 1960 (Schletzer, Cless, McClune, Mantini, and Loeffler, 1967). The objective of the program was "to increase the life satisfactions and fulfillments of innumerable individual women, and to end the waste to society of a large proportion of its potentially valuable producers."

The development of continuing education for women in the United States has been the result of a number of factors identified by Fought (1966) including: (1) increased prosperity; (2) re-evaluation of women's education; (3) expanded leisure due to technological advances; (4) the civil rights issue reopening the need for psychological fulfillment for all; (5) needed education for teachers and technical jobs; (6) expanded status of women; (7) acceptance of modern psychological theories; (8) changes in life patterns of women; and (9) increased emphasis on the need for continuing education for all due to the expansion of knowledge.

As women re-evaluate their values and self-concepts, new possibilities for expression of personal ability through individual achievement arise. Educators and counselors can create the balancing pulls which will counteract the early socialization years and permit women to develop new or different selves.

Career Development Theories for Women

The major theories describing career development (Ginzberg, et al., 1951; Super, 1957; Roe, 1956; Holland, 1966 and Osipow, 1968) all share the common assumption that there is something systematic and sequential about people's careers and their development. All the approaches also share their roots of development, in that they were tested on and designed to facilitate the understanding of the career development of the American male. Since the career lives of women are often discontinuous, as well as being dependent on socialization and sex-role development, the adaptation of existing career theories to women is rather problematical.

Identification (Osipow, 1975) has been made of three factors involved in women's career development that generate special kind of problems: (1) female self-expectiations about life roles, which stem partly from uncertainties about combinations of education/vocation/marriage, and partly from attitudes of significant males; (2) social expectations in terms of acceptability of a dual role and opportunities to implement a career choice; and (3) the lack of research that tests a comprehensive theory of educational and vocational development in women.

Super (1957) has discussed women's career patterns but his treatment of this topic is mainly descriptive. The processes which lead some women to develop a strong and stable interest in fulfilling themselves through work, and other women to view work as secondary and relatively unimportant in their lives are unclear. Super's theory postulates that individuals choose occupations perceived as congruent with their self-concepts. Assuming that individuals are motivated to implement

their self-concepts, one might expect that women would choose adult roles which are congruent with their self-concepts.

Role and self-concept are intimately interconnected (Gornick and Moran, 1971). It has been found that when people are given the "Who Are You" test to get at their self-concept, they usually respond in terms of their various roles -- wife, doctor, mother, teacher, and so forth. As a person moved from one live-cycle state to another, or from one step in a career to another, the self-concept changes. Some roles are more central for one's self-image than others; self-esteem comes from role adequacy in these more salient roles, usually determined by the social structure. Since mental health or a feeling of well-being is dependent on a positive self-concept, it is therefore dependent on the roles felt to be available to the individual. Women whose identity is derived mainly from their role as mothers rather than their role as wives and workers, women whose "significant others" are limited to their children, are in a difficult situation when their children leave. In their middle years they need to develop new commitments to maintain a positive self-concept.

According to Erikson (1963), an identity crisis is an experience of the individual who is coming to terms with his abilities and limitations, his attitudes and cultural values, and his occupational and societal roles. This crisis, according to Eriksonian theory, generally occurs in adolescence. Letchworth (1970) states that many women of differing ages who return to college report experiencing problems similar to those of the adolescent who does not know himself. Super's (1957) life-stage theory of vocational development describes the adolescent, before establishing and maintaining himself in an appropriate field of work, as he goes through an exploration stage. During this stage the individual tries out roles, explores occupations in school, in leisure activities and in part-time work. The movement through this stage is from a tentative trial and error posture, through a period of transition

where reality considerations are given weight, to the actual experience of a seemingly appropriate field for a life's work.

Harmon's (1970) study pointed out that the future occupational plans of two groups of girls were very similar at age 18 and very different 10-14 years after college. She feels that inability to predict from college which group a girl would finally be classified in, is a function of the arousal of career motivation in later life, and surmises that perception of a clear career choice does not appear before then.

Super's pattern of exploration, establishment and maintenance seems to be delayed for women. It is possible that mature women who return to college re-enter that stage of role development which Super calls the exploration stage; when she examines herself, tries out roles, explores the world of work, first tentatively and in fantasy, and later realistically in an ongoing attempt to implement a self-concept. resolve the identity crisis, and find her place in the world.

Thus, the female career process seems to encompass role development in the occupational world and role development in the more traditional homemaking world -- aspects which are to some extend conflicting (Richardson, 1974). Women can and do combine roles but the process by which the aspects of the adult female role are developed and integrated is the particularly female career development process.

Psathes (1968) attempted to develop a theory of occupational choice for women, and in doing identified a number of factors which influence entry of women into occupational roles. He emphasized the relationship between sex-role and occupational role. Marriage, economic status, husband's attitude, social class, education, occupation of parents, and values were factors cited as influencing the occupational choices of women.

Zytowski (1969) presented the first theoretical base for the prediction of career

development in women. While postulating increasing similarity of women's roles to men's in the future, he also characterizes differences in career patterns by indices of "vocational participation." He hypothesizes that "Women's preferences for pattern of vocational participation is determined by internal motivational factors," which can be predicted from knowledge of their valuing system, and are modified by environmental and ability factors. Eyde (1970) re-emphasized that Zytowski's work was just a necessary first step in the growth of a desperately needed theory of career development for women.

Psychologists and sociologists (Strong, 1943; Rosenberg, 1957; Davis, 1965; Super, 1957) have long maintained that aside from the limitations placed by external factors, values play an important role in one's career decision-making. Equality, achievement, and individualism have been regarded as the predominant American values since colonial times (Safilios-Rothschild, 1972). However, this American value system only seemed to apply to males. Recently women have begun to challenge the masculinity of certain values and the traditional stereotypes of what is vocationally or personally designated "masculine" or "feminine." Women today are being encouraged to seek a new identity and become persons in their own right.

However, attitudinal and institutional changes cannot be accomplished by women alone. Since males play an influential role in the career development of women and are generally more credible to and have more impact upon established institutions, it is essential that men also become significantly involved in the facilitation of women's career development.

A career planning program for adult women was instituted at Baldwin-Wallace College in the Fall quarter, 1974. A small group format was used, limiting the groups to 12 participants each, and meeting for 8 consecutive two hour sessions.

Up to this date over 160 women have participated in the sessions.

A brief outline of the focus of each session is described as follows:

Session 1: Self-description and analysis of individual roles.

Session 2: Attitudes that women hold about themselves, and the degree the attitudes of others influence behavior. Assertive Training.

Session 3: Interests and skills, and how they relate to the choice one makes.

Session 4: Values and how they are reflected in one's choice and behavior.

Session 5: Motivation, and how it is determined by one's interests and values.

Session 6: Career exploration. Narrowing of career choices. Utilization of resources - speakers from continuing education, placement, business, government.
Writing of resumes. Planning for interview experiences.

Session 7: Test interpretation (The testing has been interwoven through the above sessions). GATB, SCII, Kuder, EPPS, Holland's Self-Directed Search.

Session 8: Decision-making process and goal setting. Planning the steps necessary to implement a choice.

The participants** are contacted six months from the conclusion of the seminar to see if they are on their way to achieving their goals. The results of a survey of participants demonstrate the effectiveness of the program, as follows:

* 66% of women were enrolled in higher education upon completion of the program. (Only 31% prior to the seminar)

* 56% were employed outside the home upon completion of the program. (Only 5% prior to the seminar)

81% stated they had a good understanding of themselves and their career options upon completion of the seminar. (Only 3% prior to the seminar)

88% stated they were capable of setting short-term and long-range goals upon completion of the seminar. (Only 9% prior to the seminar)

* Some of the women were enrolled in classes part-time and employed part-time.

** See appendix for statements made by women upon completion of the seminar.

APPENDIX

Anonymous Remarks of Women upon Completion of the Program

"Experience CUE added to my self-understanding greatly. It also helped make me aware of more options."

"Experience CUE contributed significantly to planning future goals."

"My evaluation of possibilities is more realistic now than before."

"Experience CUE had positive value in helping me see my weaknesses as well as my strengths."

"I am more satisfied with my job than I was before CUE."

"Experience CUE helped me decide on my present course of action which is to obtain a B.A. degree with a major in psychology. Test results from CUE confirmed my interest in this field."

"It was good for me to see that the job goals I had were realistic and I would be capable of pursuing them if I really wanted to. Also, the exchange of views of others were particularly good."

"I am now employed part-time. The future seems very eventful - thanks for Experience CUE."

"I am planning on taking some college courses - toward a masters degree in social work."

"Where CUE helped me most was in giving me an extra shot of confidence and encouragement at the time I needed it."

"It gave me drive, got me going, provided impetus. Of course, the concrete occupational information was helpful in sifting options."

"CUE was the first step in doing something constructive to change the past routine. I needed the push and am grateful for the confidence CUE gave me."

"Presently I am taking a chemistry course and love it. It takes much time and effort, but I have the support of my husband and family. I feel like a renewed person."

"Experience CUE was so great. It helped me with attitudes, determination and in so many other ways, as a person, as well as in my work. This was absolutely the best class of any type I have ever taken. The class is still in my thoughts quite often. I am using what I learned to guide and direct me in making plans for the future."

"I feel that I gained real insight. The most succinct way I can put it is that my own set of values, capabilities and personality traits are O.K. And it's O.K. too, that I'm not a lot of things that other people are. I re-enrolled in college after a long absence. I don't care that I'm middle-aged, that working for good grades is kid stuff -- I'm really enjoying the whole bit."

"I found Experience CUE invaluable, I know now a lot more of my potential and of the training possibilities for me."

"The course steadied me and helped evaluate my abilities at the same time teaching me to accept my limitations. I am happier with myself and in my relationships with others. That is worth a great deal to me."

"I found that CUE pulled together all sorts of information about myself and my goals into one complete package. It also gave me a sufficient push to get started."

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